DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

VOL. II NO. 18 SEPTEMBER 4th 1953 Price: 15 Pf., 5 c., 3 d

GERMAN-SOVIET AGREEMENT

Reparations End — Factories Returned — Costs Cut

A German-Soviet Agreement which will have the immediate effect of making East Germany stronger and more prosperous was signed in Moscow on August 22nd by Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, and Vyacheslav Molotov, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

The main points of the agreement were:

1. Full accord on the holding of a peace conference with all-German participation, the formation of a Provisional All-German Government, and the holding of free all-German elections.

2. The termination of reparations payments; the handing over to East Germany of 33 Soviet owned factories situated there; big cuts in occupation costs. (Full details of these measures on page 3.)

3. Big credits and extra imports for East Germany.

4. Amnesty for German war prisoners now serving prison sentences in the Soviet Union.

The joint Soviet-German communique on the discussions stated in part:

"Complete agreement was reached that the abnormal conditions must be abolished under which Germany, eight years after the end of the war in Europe, had no peace treaty, was divided into an eastern and a western part, and had not a status of equality with other states.

"In order to achieve this goal a peace conference should be summoned in the near future. The participation of German representatives at all stages of the preparations for the conference, as well as at the conference itself, must be guaranteed.

"In order to restore the national unity of Germany on a peaceful and democratic basis, a Provisional All-German Government should be established in direct agreement between East and West Germany. The main task of this Provisional All-German Government would be to prepare and carry out all-German elections in which the German people themselves, without the intervention of foreign states, would solve the problem of the social and state structure of the united, democratic and peace-loving Germany . . .

"In the course of the negotiations agreement was reached upon a number of political and economic measures directed at the further development of the German Democratic Republic, and the raising of the material standard of living of the population.

(cont. on page 2)

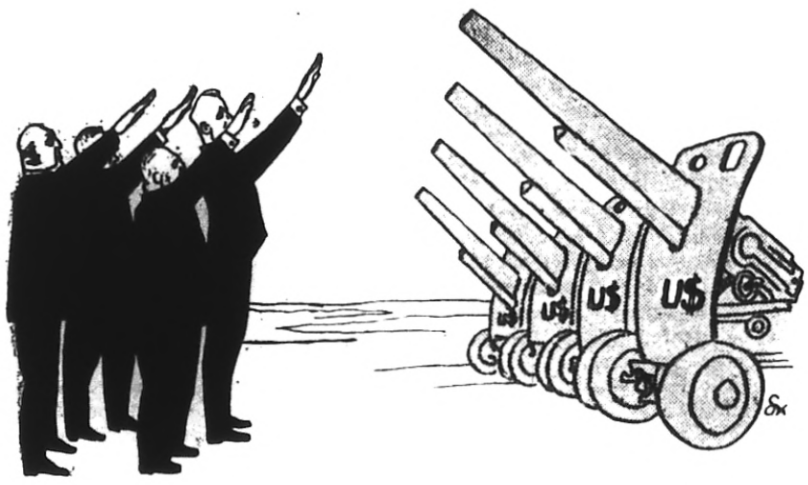
BIGGEST-EVER FAIR

The International Trade Fair held in Leipzig, East Germany from August 30th to September 9th promised to achieve a bigger volume of trade than ever before, early reports showed.

Particularly large numbers of business men from western countries attended the Fair this year, eager to do business with the countries of peace bloc, all of which were exhibiting at the Fair.

Opening the Fair, East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl told West German listeners that they could do business worth two thousand million marks with East Germany in the coming year if they forced the West German authorities to give their consent.

KRUPP, THYSSEN & CO VOTE IN THE WEST GERMAN ELECTIONS



(From "Szpilki" Warsaw)

(cont. from p. 1)

"It was taken into consideration that during the past years the German Democratic Republic has conscientiously fulfilled its obligations towards the Soviet Union, and that thanks to the efforts of the German democratic forces, the German Democratic Republic is an important factor in the struggle for peace in Europe ...

"As the result of a request made by the Government Delegation of the German Democratic Republic, the following agreement was reached: certain measures will be taken to free German prisoners of war, serving sentences for crimes committed during the war, from further imprisonment. An exception will be made in the case of persons who committed particularly serious crimes against peace and humanity.

"With the aim of strengthening and further extending the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic, which is the bulwark of the struggle for a united, peace-loving democratic Germany, it has been decided to convert the diplomatic mission of the Soviet Union, and the diplomatic mission of the German Democratic Republic into embassies, and to exchange ambassadors."

"Dragging Germany Into War"– Malenkov

Aggressive forces are trying to drag Germany into war once again, Soviet Prime Minister Georgi Malenkov stated on August 22nd, addressing the Government delegation of the German Democratic Republic at a banquet in the Kremlin.

"If we look at the period from 1900 to 1945, we see that in these 45 years Germany has devoted at least 20 years to the intensified preparations for two world wars, and more than ten years to the actual waging of these wars," Prime Minister Malenkov stated.

"Thus war was practically the main content of the entire life of Germany in the first half century. The results were the national catastrophe of 1918, and the immeasurably greater national catastrophe of 1945.

"Nearly eight million Germans paid with their lives for the war plans forced upon the German people by the militarists. Figures published by the German press show that of 100 Germans born in 1924, 25 are dead or missing, 31 were seriously wounded, 5 were wounded, and two were crippled so that they could not work.

"One generation of German youth after another has been destroyed and crippled in the fires of war.

"Thus German history teaches that German militarism, by infringing the peace and security of the countries of Europe, has been the gravedigger of the German nation.

"Despite this, the aggressors are attempting again to drag Germany along the old path of war.

"There is no possibility of camouflaging the Adenauer group, which is the general staff of militarism and revenge-policy in West Germany, and which is driving Germany into a new war.

"With this aim the German militarists are deepening the split through Germany, and provoking a deadly hatred between Germans.

"With this aim they are turning West Germany into a tool of the aggressive policy of the North Atlantic Block.

"With this aim they have chained West Germany hand and foot through the terms of the so-called 'Bonn Treaty,' which weighs more heavily upon the German people than the Versailles Treaty. The Bonn Treaty splits Germany, converts West Germany into the vassal province of a foreign state, and legalises the occupation of West Germany for 50 years.

"Those in power in Bonn are trying to whip up the hatred of the Germans against the peoples of West and East Europe. Such a policy threatens the German people with results similar to those produced by the policy of the Hitler clique. Humanity convicted the leaders of this clique as war criminals. Are Adenauer and his group not following in Hitler's traces?

"If the entire German people so desire that the German question be solved peacefully, then no aggressive force, either oversea or foreign, can prevent this noble goal being reached.

"The German Democratic Republic is called upon to play a historic role in reaching this historic goal. The peace-loving people rightly regard the Republic as the growth of a new Germany, a Germany of peace and work, democracy and progress.

"Just because the German Democratic Republic is the bulwark of the peace-loving forces in the whole of Germany, the Soviet Union regards it as its duty to extend help and assistance.

"The perspective is now opening out before the German people of living in peace with the people of the Soviet Union and France, Czechoslovakia and Poland, Britain and Belgium; of living at peace with all nations."

East & West Should Exchange Delegations

Workers delegations from East and West should meet to bring the two halves of Germany nearer together, Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht proposed at the meeting of the East German Parliament on August 26th.

"We should exchange delegations. The elected representatives of the Krupp works in the Ruhr in West Germany should come to Magdeburg in East Germany to visit the Thaelmann Factory, which formerly also belonged to Krupps. They can bring lists of their wage rates and conditions with them, and sit down with their East German colleagues and compare them," the Deputy Prime Minister stated.

"The representatives of the Leuna Works in East Germany should go to West Germany and discuss things with workers of the great chemical trust IG Farben there. I do not think that anyone would be opposed to this except the shareholders of IG Farben.

"This is a practical proposal as to the way to bring the workers in East and West nearer to each other.

"The leaders of the West German Social Democratic Party are opposed to negotiations with the representatives of the German Democratic Republic. They say that the Socialist Unity Party here regards the Social Democrats as Enemy No. 1.

"This is not true. We regard the American imperialists as Enemy No. 1, together with their West German agents, the Adenauer clique and the big business bosses.

"The fact that the Social Democratic leaders have established an 'East Bureau,' which gives aid to the American and British espionage services, is a serious matter, which must be cleared up by the Social Democratic workers. If the Social Democratic leaders would not squint so longingly in the direction of Washington and London, and instead listen to the opinion of the workers, of their membership, then we would soon be able to achieve real all-German talks."

SAYS WHO?

"Washington, Aug. 24 -- the State Department said today that the Soviet concessions to East Germany ... would really bring no benefits to the inhabitants of the Red-held zone."

United Press message printed in the Paris edition of the "New York Herald Tribune," August 25th 1953.

Now read the facts and figures about the Moscow Agreement, printed on this page.

High Commission Staff Slashed

The staff of the Soviet High Commission in Germany is being cut by two-thirds, it was officially announced in Berlin on August 28th. It was announced in May this year that the Soviet Control Commission in Germany was to be dissolved, and that the functions of representing the interests of the Soviet Union in Germany would in future be entrusted to a High Commissioner.

"Adenauer and his group are following in Hitler's traces" – Malenkov

(From "Krokodil", Moscow)

THE MOSCOW AGREEMENT IN FACTS AND FIGURES

1. The payment of reparations by the German Democratic Republic to the Soviet Union and Poland will come to an end on January 1st 1954.

The sum of reparations to be paid for damage done in Hitler's war was originally fixed at 10,000 million dollars. only a small fraction of the damage actually done by the nazi armies. This sum was greatly reduced in 1950, and since then East Germany has been paying rather over 200 million dollars annually. The reparations debt now cancelled amounts to 2537 million dollars.

2. The Soviet-owned factories in East Germany will be handed over without charge to the people of East Germany.

Thirty-three of the biggest industrial enterprises in East Germany, including important factories like the former IG Farben synthetic gasoline plant, the huge Leuna Chemical Works and the former Krupp engineering works in Magdeburg. will be handed over. These plants were taken over by the Soviet Union at the end of the war as the property of war criminals, and have since been modernised and converted to peace production. The capital value of the works handed over is calculated at 2700 million marks (approx. 680 million dollars). Under the same section of the Moscow Agreement. East Germany will be freed from indebtedness amounting to 430 million marks (approx. 108 million dollars) incurred when 66 Soviet-owned factories in East Germany were handed back in 1952.

3. Occupation costs will be reduced and limited to five percent of the annual budget.

Occupation costs for the Soviet troops stationed in East Germany will be reduced from 1950 million marks in 1953 to 1600 million marks in 1954, representing a saving for East Germany of 350 million marks (approx. 90 million dollars). In future occupation costs will not exceed 5% of the state budget. In East Germany occupation costs have been reduced from 2182 million marks in 1949 to 1600 million marks in 1954. In West Germany the development has been exactly the opposite. Occupation costs amounted to 4000 million marks in 1949/50 and have risen to 9600 million marks, 34,5% of the budget, in 1953/54.

In addition the Soviet Union has cancelled the debt owed by East Germany for the payment of occupation costs incurred in foreign currency. This debt amounted to some 25,000 million rubles (approx. 6.250 million dollars).

4. The Soviet Union will extend big credits to the German Democratic Republic for the purchase of goods.

East Germany will receive a long-term credit of 485 million rubles (approx. 120 million dollars) including 135 million rubles in freely-convertible currency, for the purchase of imports.

All in all, the cancellation of debts and other obligations means a financial gain for the German Democratic Republic of over 9500 million dollars. This sum can now be used to improve the standard of living of the people of the German Democratic Republic.

East-West Passenger Traffic

Over 430,000 East Germans have been issued with interzonal passes to visit relatives in the west since regulations were eased on June 25th as part of the new course pursued by the East German Government, it was officially announced in Berlin on August 28th.

In the period between August 13th and 25th, the East German authorities gave 123,000 passes, while the authorities in West Germany, where the population is more than twice as large, issued only 52,791 passes in the same period.

At the end of August the West German Government made a propagandistic appeal for all interzonal passes to be abolished immediately, and the appeal was backed up by the Western High Commissioners in a letter to the Soviet High Commissioner.

Simultaneously, however, West German police took massive action against interzonal travellers arriving from East Germany. In the last two days of August they arrested some 3000 travellers armed with normal passes, and deported them back to East Germany after subjecting them to all sorts of indignities.

WHO is Warmongering?

Telegraf

UNABHÄNGIGE ZEITUNG FÜR DAS FREIE BERLIN

Berlin, Sonnabend, 22. August 1953

15 Pf

Berlin - wirksamste Atombombe

Ernst Reuter: Wir müssen der politische Magnet für die unterdrückte Sowjetzone sein

Here is the headline of the West Berlin daily newspaper "Telegraf" on August 22nd 1953. It states:

"Berlin—The Most Effective Atom Bomb"

The story underneath this incredible headline is a report of a speech delivered in Frankfurt/Main on August 21st by West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter, in which he stated:

"(West) Berlin is in a position to create serious difficulties for the Soviet Union and the German administration in Pankow (The Government of the German Democratic Republic, ed.). Berlin could be the most effective atom bomb ever produced."

Next time you read a report in the big-business press about "brave little West Berlin etc. etc.," please remember that Mayor Reuter, the American puppet who runs West Berlin, regards the city as a destructive weapon for causing difficulties.

Only German unification, free all-German elections and a peace treaty can do away with the problem of Berlin, a danger spot from which German militarists could once again plunge Europe into war.

NAZI BOSS FOR NEW SPY AGENCY

A new super-spy agency, headed by one of Hitler's crack secret service men, is in process of formation in the West German capital of Bonn, the West German newsmagazine "Spiegel" reported on August 26th.

Head of the spy agency will be nazi General Gehlen, who during the war headed military intelligence on the eastern front. At the war's end he fled to the west, taking with him the lists of nazi agents who had been left behind in eastern Europe. With the help of this material and lavish grants of American money he built up a new network providing information for the Americans.

"His spy ring has now reached such proportions that a West German Ministry of Defence could not cope with it," the "Spiegel" stated.

General Gehlen's spy agency will form only one section of a new super-ministry, combining features of the Ministry of the Interior, a Propaganda Ministry and the American Federal Bureau of Investigations, the newsmagazine reported. In the event that Adenauer wins the elections the ministry will be established under the leadership of Otto Lenz, State Secretary in the Federal Chancellor's office. Second in command of the new ministry, according to the "Spiegel" will be Hans Globke, chief of personnel in Adenauer's Government. Globke's claim to fame is that under Hitler he wrote the official legal commentary to the medieval Nuremberg Laws, which reduced Jewish citizens to a status of semi-serfdom.

Democratic

GERMAN REPORT

Subscriptions rates: 4 marks, 8/- sterling $ 1.25 per annum or pro rata, postage paid.

Subscriptions may be paid at the following addresses:

Democratic Germany: At all post offices.

Britain: Collet's Subscription Dept, 40 Great Russell St., London W. C. 1

All other communications should be addressed to:

Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167 III, Berlin W 8, Germany.

ATTEMPT TO REVIVE ANTI-SEMITISM

... In a different category is an attempt by a section of the German Party — the third leg of the Bonn coalition — in Lower Saxony to stir up anti-Semitism again.

The Social Democratic headquarters here called attention today to a poster being displayed in Lower Saxony reproducing a letter in which Herr Ollenhauer (Social Democratic leader, ed.) is invited to reply to rumours that he was a Jew... The letter complains that Herr Ollenhauer has hitherto refused to reply, and the poster winds up with 'Make the right wing strong. Vote for the German Party'.

"The Times", London,
August 21st 1953

Nazi Victims Persecuted in West Berlin

A form of "cold war" is being waged ed against the victims of nazism — concentration camp inmates, political prisoners etc. — who live in West Berlin, statistics prepared by the West Berlin Association of Victims of Nazism show.

"Over 90 % of the political and radical persecutees who were given administration posts after 1945 have been sacked" the report states.

"More than 75 % of the political and radical persecutees are unemployed and live on unemployment benefit or relief. In practically all cases the requisitioned nazi furniture which was given to the persecutees at the end of the war as compensation for that which the nazis had stolen, has in the meantime been taken away from them and returned its nazi owners."

The report, which was submitted to Heinz Galinski, head of the Jewish Community, Jeanette Wolf, Social Democratic Member of the Bonn Parliament, and Doctor Radlauer, head of the Evangelical Aid Centre for Persecutees, pointed out that the official of the West Berlin administration responsible for looking after the interests of the persecutees had had very shady dealings with the nazis himself.

The man, Otto Bach, West Berlin Senator for Social Affairs, was an employee of the International Labour Office on Geneva during the Hitler period, and is accused of selling the Gestapo a list of 100,000 names and addresses of trade union officials in various countries. He received 10,000 Swiss francs for the list, which led indirectly to the arrest and killing of many anti-fascists in various lands.

AN EAST GERMAN MINER'S BUDGET

Facts and Figures on Living Standards in East and West

On this page we give you the monthly budget of the young East German coal miner Kurt Otto, who lives at 2 Kabelstrasse, Halle-Seeben.

He is married, and has two children aged one and three. His ration cards are: one heavy workers' card, one basic card (for his wife who does not go out to work) and two children's cards.

His monthly income is 550 marks, which is a good average for a miner in East Germany today.

For purposes of comparison we show in parallel columns what the same goods would cost in West Germany. A West German miner, according to official West German Government statistics, earns an average wage of 335 marks.

It will be noted that most basic foods are considerably cheaper in East Germany. Only the goods which Kurt Otto buys in the state-owned store at "free market" prices are considerably dearer than in the West, but he could get along without most of them if he were in a lower wage group.

The statistics show that after meeting all basic expenses for food and lodging, the East German miner's family has got over 220 marks left for buying furniture and clothing, shoe repairs, coal, cinema and theatre visits etc. The West German miner on the other hand is left with less than 25 marks.

The standard of living cannot be measured purely from the family budgets, however. The East German miner Otto gets a good canteen meal at his pit for 40 pfennigs, much cheaper than his West German colleague, and he and his family can spend 14 days of his annual three weeks holiday in a trade union holiday home for only 60 marks.

And, of course, when his children have got a little older, they will have a really good education, a chance to go on to the university, and the knowledge that they will never be unemployed.

Here are the answers to some of the questions you may want to ask after studying the figures.

What about quality? On the average the quality of the foodstuffs is about the same in both parts of Germany, though there are minor variations; the Soviet butter often on sale in East Germany has a lower moisture content than butter in the West, for instance.

Has the miner in the West any advantages? His cigarettes are probably better in quality, his shoes are cheaper, and many articles of clothing are of higher quality in West Germany. But in the East quality is going up, and prices down, as a result of the new government policy of providing more and better consumer goods, and any advantage the West German has in this respect is rapidly disappearing.

Is Kurt Otto's wage and ration card category typical? For a miner or skilled worker in heavy industry, yes. Unskilled workers, shop assistants and so on earn a good deal less but still more than their West German colleagues, but every opportunity is given to increase qualifications and move into a higher wage group. But miners in West Germany too are relatively highly paid, and unskilled workers get proportionally less, so that the comparison given in the table is valid for the great majority of workers.

Footnote: The statistics given were compiled in July, but developments in East Germany have been so rapid that they are already out of date for one item — fish. Fish was taken off the ration in East Germany, and reduced in price during July, and fish ration tickets can now be used to buy meat. This means that Frau Otto will have saved on her fish purchase, and in addition she has saved several marks by buying more meat at low ration prices and less at high "free market" prices.

HERE IT IS, IN POUNDS AND OUNCES

Figures are for a calendar month. Prices are given in marks and pfennigs.

Rations for miner Kurt Otto and his family	Per kilo		Total	
	West	East	West	East
8 lb. 4 oz. butter	7.60	4.20	28.50	15.75
11 oz. margarine	2.40	2.20	.75	.66
1 lb. bacon	5.80	2.90	2.61	1.31
4 lb. 6 oz. pork	5.70	2.70	11.40	5.40
3 lb. 4 oz beef	4.50	2.50	6.89	3.83
2 lb. 3 oz. sausage	4.40	3.72	4.40	3.72
1 lb. 1 oz. salami	7.20	5.00	3.60	2.50
1 lb. 8 oz. filleted fish	1.40	2.80	.98	1.96
13 lb. 10 oz. sugar	1.40	1.11	8.68	6.88
52½ pints milk	.42	.26	12.60	7.80
Total expenditure on rationed goods			80.41	49.81
Unrationed goods				
30 loaves (3 lb. 5 oz. each)	1.22	.72	36.60	21.60
66 lbs. potatoes	.23	.10	6.90	3.00
6 lb. 10 oz. flour	1.50	1.28	4.50	3.84
4 lb. jars jam	1.20	1.15	4.80	4.60
2 lb. 3 oz. extra butter (free market)	7.60	20.00	7.60	20.00
2 lb. 3 oz. cooking oil " "	4.50	15.20	4.50	15.20
2 lb. 3. oz. extra margarine " "	2.40	8.00	2.40	8.00
2 lb. 3 oz. extra sausage " "	5.60	14.25	5.60	14.25
2 lb. 3 oz. ham " "	8.00	19.50	8.00	19.50
Fruit, vegetables, macaroni, etc.			35.00	40.00
Rent			35.00	25.00
Electric light (40 kwh. units)			9.50	4.70
Radio licence			2.00	2.05
Newspaper			3.75	3.00
Trade union dues			5.00	9.00
600 cigarettes (per cigarette)	.08½	.10	51.00	60.00
Sweets etc.			9.50	18.00
Grand total			**312.06**	**321.55**

(Note: The division into "rationed" and "unrationed" applies only to East Germany.)

Herr Biedermann From West Germany

By Michel Deutsch

This little story has one disadvantage — it is almost true. It is the story of the West German Herr Biedermann, who was a sturdy Social Democrat, and who one day went to the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution" in order to help to protect the constitution.

"Your name?" was the first question with which he was received.

Herr Biedermann gave his full name.

"Where and when were you born, and where do you live?" were the next questions. Herr Biedermann replied carefully and truthfully.

"Do you belong to a party? Which party? For how long?"

Herr Biedermann threw back his shoulders and pushed out his chest. He was proud of being on old Social Democrat, and of standing by democracy through thick and thin, as a good Social Democrat should. In fact that was just the reason why he was here now.

"I am a Social Democrat" he declared with shining eyes. "I have been a member of the Social Democratic Party for 35 years, and it is just for this reason that I find it necessary . . ."

"Hm . . . Hmm" said the official on the other side of the desk, as he made some hurried notes. "And what exactly is it that you find necessary?"

Herr Biedermann was a little put out by the interruption. "I think it is necessary . . . that is to say I wanted to draw attention to the fact that a nazi secret group meets regularly in the block of apartments where I live. They are members of the notorious 'Federation of German Youth' and former S.S. officers. I know one of the S.S. officers from the time when I was imprisoned. I was shut up for ten months in a concentration camp . . ."

"Ach, so" said the official, and looked very sharply at Herr Biedermann. "That is very interesting. Extremely interesting, one might say."

"Yes, and I think it is necessary, in the interests of our new democracy that the Office for the Protection of the Constitution should take immediate steps" said Herr Biedermann.

"Of course, of course, Herr Biedermann" said the official. "We shall take steps very rapidly."

Four days after his visit to the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution", Herr Biedermann was set upon one evening by a bunch of thugs, and beaten up.

Two days later, detectives of the federal police raided his apartment, and turned everything upside down in their search for evidence that he was "agent of an eastern power".

The next day, just one week after his visit to the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution", Herr Biedermann was hauled out of his bed at 4 a.m. and arrested on the charge of "preparations to commit high treason".

You think the story has no moral? Oh yes it has. One day, in his cell, Herr Biedermann received a letter from the District Committee of the Social Democratic Party, announcing that he had been expelled because of "conduct harmful to the party". And the expulsion was backdated to March 29th 1953, the day on which he had paid his visit to the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution".

(From "Unser Rundfunk", Berlin)

Election Terror Includes Murder

Election terror and suppression in West Germany before the general elections on September 6th included murder and serious wounding, reports from West Germany show.

Otto Mueller, deputy secretary of the Communist Party in the Fulda district, died in hospital on August 15th following a brutal beating which he received while posting elections placards. Another Communist election worker was seriously injured.

"Let's Have a War" Cries Nazi Ace

The East-West conflict can only be resolved by war, Colonel Rudel, nazi air ace, and election candidate of the German Reich Party, told an election meeting in Regensburg, American Zone, on August 30th.

British Opera Premiered in Leipzig

The opera "Wat Tyler" by British composer Alan Bush was due to receive its world premiere in Leipzig on September 6th, during the Leipzig Fair. Berlin Radio transmitted a radio version of the opera last year, but the Leipzig staging will be the first proper performance.

OUR BOOKSHELF

ÜBER ALLES by George Mikes. Allan Wingate, London, 8s 6d

Some years ago Mr. Mikes wrote rather a funny book about Britain entitled "How to be an Alien".

Now he has tried to repeat his success with a new book about Germany today. Unfortunately it is very hard to be funny about West Germany, with its neo-nazis and revival of militarism, and the book as a whole is a flop.

But once or twice Mr. Mikes repeats his old satirical touch, as when he describes the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, where the East and West Sectors meet:

"I have seen many taxis arrive at the Potsdamer Platz, with passengers wearing broad-brimmed hats and colourful ties. The passengers get out, walk up to the sign: 'You are now leaving the British Sector'. Not they. They are not leaving it. They have a good look behind the iron curtain — sometimes going as far as to use a pair of binoculars — they have themselves photographed in front of the British signpost and then return home to start work on their book on conditions in Russia."

An illustration by David Langdon, in "ÜBER ALLES" reviewed above.

Peace Treaty Points (1)

THE ODER-NEISSE FRONTIER

This series of articles will deal in detail with some of the points raised in the Soviet draft proposal for a peace treaty with Germany. This draft for a treaty was first submitted to the Western Powers on March 10th 1952, and was repeated on August 15th 1953.

The draft stated:

"Territory: The territory of Germany is governed by the decisions taken by the Potsdam Conference of the Great Powers."

What were the territorial decisions taken by the Potsdam Conference?

The territorial clauses of the Potsdam Agreement regarding Germany stated:

"The conference has agreed in principle to the... transfer to the Soviet Union of the city of Koenigsberg and the area adjacent to it as described above, subject to expert examination of the actual frontier.

"The President of the United States and the British Prime Minister have declared that they will support the proposal of the conference at the forthcoming peace settlement."

"The three heads of Government agree that... the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea... (the Oder—Neisse Line, ed.) including that portion of East Prussia not placed under the administration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ... and including the area of the former free city of Danzig, shall be placed under the administration of the Polish State..."

The effect of these provisions was that the former German province of East Prussia became part of the territory of the Soviet Union and Poland, and that the provinces of Silesia and Pomerania, east of the Oder-Neisse Line, were incorporated into Poland.

These territories have, in the eight years since the end of the war, been re-settled and rebuilt, and have become integral parts of the Soviet Union and Poland.

Reactionaries and militarists in West Germany constantly call for the "return of the lost territories," and use the problem of Germany's eastern frontier as a slogan for whipping up the West German public for a new war.

They attempt to base themselves on the argument that the Potsdam Agreement stated "The final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should await the peace settlement."

However, the Potsdam Agreement also stated:

"The three Governments... recognise that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary will have to be undertaken."

In the years immediately following the war these transfers were in fact carried out, with the full support of the British and American authorities in West Germany, and the British and American military missions and legations in Poland. According to official figures prepared by the Allied Control Council in Germany in April 1947, a total of 5,678,936 Germans had been removed from the areas up to that date, and resettled in Germany.

The Germans removed from these areas were sent partly to East Germany, and partly to the West. In East Germany they were immediately treated as full citizens, and were provided with housing and work. A high proportion of them were settled on the land, and given their own farms under the land reform and the splitting up of the huge Junker estates.

In the West, on the other hand, the re-settlers were treated as second class citizens, confined in large refugee camps, and no attempt was made to help them return to normal life. On the contrary, every attempt was made to keep them dissatisfied so that they would be ready to take part in any campaign to "fight for their lost homes."

West German Chancellor Adenauer admitted recently that the West German authorities did not intend to try to absorb these unfortunate people: "The task of integrating them, to see that they get employment, not to let them degenerate and waste away, to care for their young people, to make useful citizens of them—that task reaches out beyond our capacities" ("Time" New York, August 31st 1953).

The difference in treatment in East Germany and West Germany was clearly reflected even in the official terminology used in describing these people. In East Germany they are always described, in both official documents and everyday life, as "Umsiedler"—re-settlers. The term is little used today because they have become completely integrated in ordinary life. In West Germany they are always described as "Ost-Flüchtling"—refugees from the east. The term is still in constant use, since millions of them are still living in very bad conditions in refugee camps, cut off from, and often played off against, the local population.

The Oder—Neisse line was finally delimited as the German-Polish frontier on July 6th 1950, when the Prime Ministers of the German Democratic Republic and Poland signed a demarcation agreement.

The advocates of war in West Germany use every method to drum up public opinion against the Oder—Neisse frontier.

They talk, in the same way as Hitler talked, about "Lebensraum"—living space—and every method of propaganda from school books to films is pressed into service to foster resentment against the Poles.

As an example, in the Sandbostel Camp near Bremen, which is run by the West German Government for misled young people who have "fled to the free West" from East Germany, the various barracks are named "East Prussia," "Silesia" and "Pomerania"—all provinces which now form part of Poland.

But all Germans in East and West who really want peace and good relations with their neighbours are prepared to accept the frontiers as they were laid down in the Potsdam Agreement. In this they agree with British Labour leader Clement Attlee, who spoke in the British House of Commons on July 21st 1953 about the territories east of the Oder—Neisse. He said:

"There have been quarrels about these territories for 700 years. It is time they settled down with what they had, and made the best of it."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

"The crowds on East Berlin's Stalinallee, showpiece of the East zone... gaze cynically at the sparsely filled shop windows."

United Press report, printed in the Paris edition of the "New York Herald Tribune," August 22nd, 1953.

By John Peet

So I went to have a look at the "cynical gazers" and the empty shop windows. I started out from Strausberger Platz, where workmen are putting the last touches to some of the fine new apartment houses for East Berlin workers, most of which have shops and stores on the ground floor. The time was about 5 p.m. on August 28th.

Here is what I found, walking along the south side of the Stalin Allee:

The first shop is a large grocery store with four large show windows, run by the cooperative society. The first window was filled with packaged foods, flour and rice. I counted seven different varieties of macaroni, noodles, etc.

Fish Pyramid

The second window was occupied by a pyramid of tins of fish—several varieties of fish in oil from the Soviet Union, fish in tomato sauce from Poland, and herrings from Norway, West Germany and an East German canning factory.

The third window displayed eight different sorts of preserved meat in glass containers; tinplate for canning is rather short here, and glass jars are just as good. And the fourth window displayed a nice selection of liqueurs and wines, both German and imported. I took a look inside the shop and made sure that everything on show in the windows was actually on sale, before passing on to the next window. This was very gaily decorated with dancing figures made up of skeins of knitting wool, darning silk and darning wool, for the shop was selling mending materials and clothing accessories.

Inside the shop were 25 different types of lace for trimmings, and a rainbow-like selection of bright scarves of Perlon—the nylon-like substance made in East Germany.

The third shop had its windows filled with knitted goods, not particularly remarkable, and the fourth shop, a very big one, offered every conceivable variety of glass and china ware, from egg cups to 76 piece dinner services, from preserving jars to china figures for the top of the piano.

Next shop had one window full of children's night clothes, and another showed a very full variety of mens' shirts.

Tuck

Plum tarts, cream puffs and the flat coils of puff pastry which the Berliners know as "Pig's Ears" filled the next shop window, that of a bakery. Inside the shelves offered literally dozens of sorts of cakes, both cream and plain, besides rolls and bread in a whole range of types.

Next door the windows were perhaps a bit dull, but interesting nevertheless. It was a diet shop, offering such wholesome and useful things as bottles of carrot juice, special sugarless preserved fruits for diabetics, malted milk, non-alcoholic apple juice, neutral diet for convalescents, and dozens of other indispensable but not particularly lively articles.

A great contrast was provided by the sausage shop a few steps further. Germans have a world-wide reputation as sausage eaters, but I was a little surprised myself to find that there were nine different sorts of sausage in the window, supplemented by no fewer than 15 more varieties inside, including delicious real salami from Hungary.

Sunkist Oranges

And so I could go on. The whole length of the newly built Stalin Allee is lined with shops like these, and many more. In the fruiterer's shop I saw plums, apples, pears from Germany, peaches and melons from Hungary, oranges (Sunkist Brand, from California), peanuts from I don't know where, and plenty of other goods; there were shops selling radios, bicycles, shoes, ladies' hats, clothing, and most other things you can think of.

There are still some shortages, of course, and nobody attempts to conceal them, but the United Press correspondent who wrote that piece about the "sparsely filled shop windows" should really take a look for himself.

Last week I happened to be in the Oberspree Cable Works, one of East Berlin's big factories, at lunch time, so I looked into the canteen to see what the midday meal looked like.

I knew that the allotment of meat, fat and sugar for factory meals had been doubled in May this year, but I was not really prepared for the good meal which was being provided. The menu for the day offered as main dish pork with onion sauce, with sauerkraut and cucumber salad.

And not only was the food good, but it was a real man-sized portion, with about three and a half ounces of meat per person. Canteen meals are off-the-ration, of course, and in this factory the meal costs 70 pfennigs—the cost of four copies of a daily newspaper, or three and a half boxes of matches.

Subsidised Meals

I found out that the actual cost of preparing the meals, and serving them in the airy canteen, averages between one mark and 1.20, but that the difference is made up by a subsidy from the factory management.

Incidentally the canteen looks more like a popular restaurant than the word "canteen" suggests. Meals are served at small tables for four, covered with cheerful table cloths, with a vase of flowers on each table.

In the kitchen I discovered that the meal being served that day—it happened to be Tuesday—was not exceptional. Next day the kitchen staff were planning sausage and peas—one of those very fat Berlin sausages called "Bockwurst" with five ounces of meat in it; and the day after that there was going to be gulash and pickled cucumber.

One of the cooks told me that I ought to have had a look at the sort of meal that they had had to serve in the bad days after the war, if I wanted to get a real idea of how much things had improved.

"Once in 1947 we had nothing to serve for 15 days running except stew made of carrots and groats," she said. "But we stayed at work, and got things going again, and now things are really looking up. Soon we shall be able to go ahead and offer a choice of two dishes at the midday meal, so that people can choose which they like best."

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet, Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8, Telephone: 22 62 08. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik